

Rock Climbing – Franklyn, Sense Hyde Close Resident

The Castle Climbing Centre, North London

We have been delivering inclusive climbing sessions at The Castle Climbing Centre since the beginning of the Sporting Sense project. This year we put on a new session for the residents at Sense Hyde Close home. Participants have had the opportunity to attend the weekly sessions for 12 weeks now alongside instructor, Houe. Every week 3-4 people attend with their support staff and each have gained new experiences and benefits from attending.



One resident in particular, Franklyn, has really taken to the activity and both his key support worker and mum have seen a big change in him. Franklyn is almost 25, he is deafblind and has cerebral palsy and epilepsy. He has lived at Hyde Close for 6 years now and enjoys swimming and walking in the park. When we first suggested rock climbing to his support workers at Hyde Close, no one was sure how he'd take to it, he'd never tried anything like it before.

For the first couple of weeks Franklyn spent his time at the session becoming familiar with the environment, the equipment and the instructor. It wasn't long however, before he started climbing. One of the support staff at Hyde Close is a regular climber at the same venue, when he can attend with Franklyn, he climbs alongside him and encourages him along the way. By about week 8, Franklyn was regularly climbing to the top and starting to explore and find the holes himself to pull himself up.



Both his mum and key support worker Suzanne have seen a big change in Franklyn's confidence. Suzanne says, *"For Franklyn, the sessions have meant he has been able to develop a relationship with someone outside of Sense, a very trusting relationship with the instructor, he's definitely gotten quite confident and it's increased his strength."*



When asked what the best thing about the sessions was Suzanne said, *"For me, thinking that he couldn't do it and not only being able to do it, but he was able to get to the very top. So it's shown that even if you think someone hasn't got the physical capabilities of doing something that you should try, and that there are different ways of doing things with the support of the instructor and equipment."*

Their instructor Houe has built up a great relationship with all the participants and has found a way to support everyone to have a go. Houe said, *"I've noticed that they've all become a lot more confident and a lot more open to the area, the more they've started coming...I've gotten to know a whole new group of people and it's just been a really fun experience for me."*

Rock Climbing is a great activity, it can help to build muscle strength and improve flexibility. Over time it can also help to develop concentration and determination. It also a very tactile activity, which is beneficial for the people we support at Sense. To support the participants at home, we have taken some of the used climbing holes to use as an object of reference. These will be put up in the garden and a wall, which residents can visit before their session.